



INFO-ALERT

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INFO-ALERT brings to your attention a selection of abstracts of current articles and new materials from American publications on current political, economic, social issues and trends in the United States. These materials are available upon request from the **Information Resource Center**.

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1. TRENDS IN TERRORISM: 2006

Raphael Perl

CRS Report for Congress, July 21, 2006, 21 pages

Raphael Perl, a specialist in International Affairs with the Congressional Research Service, details emerging trends in terrorism. He cites attacks that aim to cause economic damage, such as attacks on transportation infrastructure, tourism, and oil installations; the growing number of unattributed terrorist attacks; and the growing power and influence of radical Islamist political parties in foreign nations. Implications for U.S. policy are also explained.

2. INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING: SMART POWER

Lex Rieffel and Sarah Zalud

Brookings Policy Briefs, June 2006, 9 pages

International volunteer programs contribute directly and indirectly to America's security and well-being. Through such programs, Americans can improve their relations with the rest of the world but there is room for much growth. Policies aimed at strengthening existing programs include increased funding for the Peace Corps, raising public awareness of volunteer programs overseas, linking service and study, and measuring effectiveness.

3. AMERICA'S NEW STRATEGIC PARTNER?

Ashton B. Carter

Foreign Affairs, July/August 2006, 5 pages

The U.S.-India deal, in which the United States acknowledges India as a legitimate nuclear power, has inspired much debate focused on nuclear issues. Opponents claim that Bush's concessions to India could seriously injure the integrity of the international nonproliferation regime. Ashton Carter, a Harvard professor, admits that while the deal is not balanced, the damage done to nonproliferation is limited and overstated. The U.S. government characterizes the deal as a broader strategic agreement, not an arms treaty. Washington gave way on the nuclear front in order to "gain much more on other fronts," in particular future dealings with Iran, Pakistan, and potentially China. Many of the benefits, however, are contingent on India's future, with "no guarantees," as India will have its "own opinions about how best to live up to the deal -- or not."

4. CHINA'S CHARM: IMPLICATIONS OF CHINESE SOFT POWER

Josh Kurlantzick

Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief No. 47, June 2006, 8 pages

Over the past decade China has downplayed its hard power in Southeast Asia, instead emphasizing its soft power. Josh Kurlantzick analyzes China's influence and soft power policy tools and argues that, while China's rising soft power could prove benign or even beneficial in some respects, it could prove disastrous for Southeast Asia – for democratization, for anticorruption initiatives, and for good governance. He concludes that before China's appeal spreads to other parts of the developing world, U.S. policy makers need to understand how China exerts soft power, and whether elements of China's charm could threaten U.S. interests.

ECONOMICS & TRADE

5. THE RETURN OF SAVING

Martin Feldstein

Foreign Affairs, May/June 2006, 4 pages

The U.S. savings rate has been falling for decades. But that downward trend will likely soon be reversed, as factors such as rising mortgage interest rates force Americans to start saving more. The change will ultimately be for the better, but in the short term it could cause serious problems for the United States and its trading partners unless they start preparing immediately.

6. TWO MYTHS OF GLOBALIZATION

Edward Gottesman

World Policy Journal, Spring 2006, 9 pages

Edward Gottesman, lawyer and member of the President's Council on International Activities at Yale University, notes that an economic discussion of globalization has often focused on two widely accepted, but largely misunderstood, theories. First, China is the "next economic superpower." The growth of the United States in the nineteenth century, then an under-populated, resource-rich country, bears no resemblance to the export-dependent growth spurt that China, with limited natural resources, has experienced since 1979. The second myth is that the current account deficit the United States has run for a number of years (about a third from trade with China) is "unsustainable" and will result in some global economic catastrophe.

7. COUNTERFEITING: LINKS TO ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORIST FUNDING

Peter Lowe

Journal of Financial Crime, Vol.13, no.2, 2006, 3 pages

Peter Lowe of the International Chamber of Commerce's Counterfeiting Intelligence Bureau comments on terrorist funding. Counterfeiting and credit card fraud is popular since it is hugely profitable and is a low priority for law enforcement. Additionally, he explains, a major indirect funding source of terrorism is funds raised from counterfeiting operations perpetrated by sympathizers, with no direct ties to the terrorist groups themselves.

SOCIAL ISSUES & VALUES, EDUCATION & THE ARTS

8. CULTURAL RENAISSANCE OR CULTURAL DIVIDE?

Bill Ivey and Steven J. Tepper

Chronicle of Higher Education, May 19, 2006, 5 pages

The authors contend that America is on the threshold of a significant cultural transformation comparable to the changes brought about by Gutenberg's invention of the printing press. They distinguish between those who increasingly are producers of their own art and cultural experience (using products such as iPods or TiVos) and those with less time, money, and knowledge who are left to the mercy of a few mass-media giants. As technology and economic change conspire to create a new cultural elite and a new underclass, the former chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts and his colleague at Vanderbilt University challenge educators, artists, and other arts leaders to create a cultural life that embraces all Americans.

9. TWO BOOKS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Kevin Larimer

Poets & Writers, July/August 2006, 10 pages

What if the hype surrounding your first published book is only hype? No writer is immune to the special breed of worry that begins on the publication date of the first book and grows during the long wait for the much anticipated second. Consider the cases of two young novelists, Emily Barton and Gary Shteyngart. Fortunately for them, their worries did nothing but fuel the drive to write strong second books. And the critics responded, praising Barton's *Brookland* (one reviewer suggested it will contend for next year's Pulitzer Prize) and Shteyngart's *Absurdistan*. So much for the slump. A sidebar box lists other young novelists who are members of the sophomore class, with their second books being published this summer.

10. ALEXANDER HAMILTON: THE MAN WHO MODERNIZED MONEY

Laura Wolff Scanlan

Humanities, January/February 2006, 4 pages

An exhibit currently touring the United States focuses on the life and legacy of Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers and the first Secretary of the Treasury. Best known for his duel with Aaron Burr, Hamilton had some of the most modern ideas of the Founders -- the need for an independent press, a strong central government and treasury, a national banking system and a diversified economy. As the primary author of *The Federalist* essays, Hamilton persuaded a reluctant American public to adopt the Constitution. Growing up on St. Croix in the West Indies, he witnessed the brutality of slavery; he also recognized the need for both manufacturing and farming for a self-sustainable economy. Notes the author, Hamilton "left an imprint on American institutions still present two centuries after his death."

11. ALL ROADS LEAD THROUGH AMERICA: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Angelina Sciolla

AAA World, July/August, 7 pages

A half-century after President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Highway Act of 1956, launching one of the most ambitious infrastructure endeavors in U.S. history, the Interstate Highway System underscores how much America has changed -- much for the better, but not without a bit of nostalgia for the less complicated life of days past. The 1956 legislation launched the construction of superhighways with wider lanes designed to accommodate higher speeds, with no intersections, traffic signals or rail crossings to interfere with the steady flow. Today, more than 46,000 miles of highway crisscross the nation, forming a system that includes 82 tunnels, some 14,000 interchanges and more than 55,000 bridges. Over the years, the establishment of this system has changed the tourism industry and American vacation habits.

12. OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS AND CITIZENS: IMPROVING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Gary R. Chandler

National Civic Review, Summer 2006, 7 pages

Educators across the United States are finding new ways to bridge communication gaps between themselves, parents, and other community members. As a result, entire communities are coming together to build safe, seamless, and supportive learning environments for youth. This article highlights some of the outstanding examples of community-building activities implemented by educators who earned the Ambassador in Education Award in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

13. CAN MINORITY LANGUAGES BE SAVED?

Eric Garland

The Futurist, July/August 2006, 6 pages

Globalized economics and media are changing the face of culture around the globe, reducing the number of languages that humans speak. As the world economy becomes more integrated, a common tongue has become more important than ever to promote commerce, which puts speakers of regional dialects and minority languages at a distinct disadvantage. Is it possible for globalization and new technology to safeguard cultural identity while simultaneously allowing free exchanges of ideas and goods?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

14. **ADAPT OR DIE**

Rachel Smolkin

American Journal Review, June/July 2006, 7 pages

As newspaper companies confront a challenging future, they are increasingly viewing their trademark print product as the engine driving a diverse “portfolio” that includes other “platforms” such as Web site and niche publications. Is this a strategy for survival?

15. **LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE INTERNET: LEARNING FROM THE PAST**

Michael M. Roberts

Educasuse Review, July/August 2006, 6 pages

Michael Roberts, president and CEO of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), describes a few highlights of Internet development, analyzes some of the policy factors at work in that development, and suggests some avenues for academic contributions to the successful evolution of the future Internet.